

# Wing airmen prepare for possible Zaire evacuation

More than 15 airmen from RAF Lakenheath and many from other USAFE bases are deploying to West Africa to support U.S. European Command preparations for a possible noncombatant evacuation from Zaire.

The operation may become necessary if the U.S. government determines its citizens are endangered in the wake of fighting between rebel and government forces in Zaire. According to the Associated Press, rebels now control about a quarter of the country.

USAFE people and equipment will be deploying to locations in West Africa, including Brazzaville, Congo and Libreville, Republic of Gabon. Other bases participating in the operation include Aviano AB, Italy; Spangdahlem AB and Ramstein AB, Germany; and RAF Mildenhall. These forces will provide communications, base operations, air operations,

headquarters element, medical, security and other support.

This deployment enhances the U.S. military's ability to ensure the security of U.S. citizens in Zaire if an evacuation should become necessary, according to a European Command statement. When the current deployment is complete, up to 625 members of a joint task force will be at locations ashore in central Africa.

In addition to the USAFE troops, EUCOM officials said Air Force units include tactical airlift control elements from stateside units; aircraft and crews from Air Mobility Command, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve; and Air Force Special Operations Command people and aircraft based in England. (Story compiled from local and USAFE News Service sources).

## Students attend European symposium

By Becky Papp  
"Jet 48" correspondent

Nine students from RAF Lakenheath High School took part in this year's European junior and senior high school symposium in Brussels, Belgium, March 14 - 16.

The event provides an opportunity for students from Department of Defense Dependent Schools, American and other international schools to compete in the sciences and humanities.

After the initial judging at the competition, the students with the 10 best projects had to give oral presentations while others presented their information with a poster and question-and-answer session.

Melissa Gillis, a senior, placed third overall with her project on the relative value of using arms and legs in training for swimming. Gillis gave an oral presentation with transparencies to an audience of about 120 students, teachers and judges.

"It was scary getting up there, but I knew people were backing me up," said Gillis. "Everybody put in a lot of work. It was a real team effort."

Gillis, along with the four other top finishers, now have the opportunity to attend another symposium in Durham, N.C., May 1 - 4. Students in the poster competition competed for cash awards.

Other Lakenheath students taking part in the competition were seniors Keara Keller, Amber Brock, Carina DuHadway, Christopher O'Shaughnessy, David Parker, Amanda Allen, Sheila Baber and junior, Devon Gessert.

Some students attend to observe the sym-



Photo by SSgt. Steve Ball

**Melissa Gillis gathers information for the stateside symposium.**

posium along with the competitors, in the hope that they will compete the following year, according to Darryl Brock, physics and advanced placement biology teacher at the high school.

"We enter the competition every year and about every other year a Lakenheath student places in the symposium to win a trip to the symposium in the states," said Brock. "Ultimately, the goal is to encourage good research."

The trip was funded by the Army, Navy and Air Force research laboratories.

## Two plead guilty in courts martial

By Capt. Jennifer Dickey  
Legal office

Two RAF Lakenheath NCOs pled guilty during courts-martial in March.

SSgt. Willie Scruggs, 48th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, pled guilty to three charges of indecent exposure in a one-day special court-martial March 12.

Scruggs admitted to publicly exposing himself to neighbors from the front window of his home on two occasions and exposing himself another time to a housekeeper.

In an unsworn statement during the sentencing phase of the trial, Scruggs apologized for acting with poor judgment, recognizing his "actions have brought embarrassment and discredit to my family and the Air Force."

Military judge Col. James Young sentenced Scruggs to a bad conduct discharge, reduction to E-3, and 45 days confinement, but recommended that the forfeiture of pay that becomes automatic with confinement be directed to Scruggs' family.

During a one-day special court-martial March 18, SSgt. Lafayette Cox, 493rd Fighter Squadron, pled guilty to charges of assault, drunk and disorderly conduct and unlawful entry.

The three charges stemmed from the events following a celebration of a squadron award.

Cox had begun drinking after work at the NCO club in celebration of the award. Around 9 p.m., he joined a party held by a squadron member at a Lakenheath dormitory. Cox continued to drink at the party. At several points in the evening, Cox wandered into a neighboring female dormitory, approaching various female airmen and propositioning them.

Later that evening, he also entered an unlocked room in the female dormitory while a female airman was sleeping.

During an unsworn statement, Cox said, "If I hadn't been drinking so much, I wouldn't be in the trouble that I am today." He described his decision to overindulge that night as "the dumbest mistake of my life."

Military judge Lt. Col. Robin Walmsley sentenced Cox to reduction to the grade of E-3 and confinement for 75 days.